New Programme Validation External Review Panel Report

Programme Reference Number:	S012
Faculty/School(s):	Education, Design and Humanities
Department(s):	Education
Type of Review:	SPA

Details of Programme(s) Reviewed:

Title:	Award Type:	NFQ Level:	ECTS:	Duration:	Delivery Mode:	Proposed Student Intake:	Proposed Start Date:
Certificate in Building SAFER Communities: Using evidence-based community action to reduce alcohol harm	SPA	7	10	1 Sem	Online	26	Sep. 2025

Date of Review:	Friday 24th January 2025

Review Panel

Panellist Role	Title	Name	Organisation	Job Title
Chair	Dr	Seamus Lennon	ATU	Head of Department of Creative Education
External Academic Discipline Expert	Dr	Trevor O' Brien	Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education, Mary Immaculate College (University of Limerick)	Programme Leader / Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive Special Education (PGDISE) and Master's in Inclusive Special Education (MEdISE).
Academic Discipline Expert	Dr	Brónagh Heverin,	ATU Donegal	Head of Department of Law, Public Service and Education.
Industry/ Community Representative	Mr	Paul Keogh	Summerhill College Sligo	Principal
Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar (VPAAR) Nominee (Academic Secretary)	Ms	Carmel Brennan	ATU	Assistant Registrar

All external members of the panel have declared that they are independent of ATU (Atlantic Technological University), and all have declared that they have no conflict of interest.

Programme Design Team

The panel met the staff listed below during the review process.

Grainne Ketelaar	

Introduction

SAFER is a World Health Organization initiative and technical package which aims to assist governments to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and related health, social and economic consequences. "SAFER" is an acronym for the 5 most cost-effective interventions to reduce alcohol related harm:

- Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability
- Advance and enforce strong drink-driving laws
- Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions, referral and treatment
- Enforce bans and comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, promotion and sponsorship
- Raise alcohol prices

Rationale for Programme(s)

This specialized certificate is the only one of its kind in Ireland and has been developed as a collaboration between Alcohol Forum Ireland, the Irish Community Action on Alcohol Network and the ATU.

The World Health Organisation's new European Framework recognises the important role of communities in helping to reduce harm. This provides the rationale for this interactive and flexible stand-alone module, which will be assessed via participants applying the learning to their own community contexts.

The trajectory of alcohol harms continues to evolve as the retail landscape for alcohol consumption shifts with changes in marketing and sales; and these are hugely shaped by national, regional and local contexts in different countries. Globally every 10 seconds a person dies from alcohol-related causes. In Ireland, 3 people die every day from alcohol-related causes. Alcohol causes cancer, wreaks havoc on families through what Ireland's Child & Family Agency (Tusla) calls 'Hidden Harms'. There is growing concern about surging diagnoses of liver disease, directly attributable to alcohol consumption patterns, among young men and women in Ireland.

Community action on alcohol in Ireland is growing and community activists and frontline workers across the public sector and health services have expressed a desire to better understand the evidence base and knowledge informing policy frameworks such as the SAFER technical package so that this can be translated into practical actions and interventions at a community level. There is interest in the roll out of this stand-alone module, with potential for international reach, and the WHO European Regional Office have agreed support the roll out of this stand-alone module, allowing it to serve as a pilot.

The WHO SAFER technical package is part of an intentional effort to implement a Global Alcohol Strategy. The learning content helps learners understand the role of the alcohol industry and the commercial determinants of health in a national and international context, the actions needed to prevent industry interference in policy making, and the role of civil society in advocacy to reduce alcohol harms.

Validation Criteria

ATU's Developing and Validating New Taught Programmes Policy specifies that new programmes must comply with the following criteria for validation:

1. The programme aims and learning outcomes are clear and aligned with the proposed award title.
2. The rationale for the programme is well informed and justified.
3. The design of the programme is suitably structured and fit for purpose.
4. The design of the programme ensures that students can successfully achieve the Programme Learning Outcomes.
5. The teaching, learning and assessment strategy is well planned and appropriate for the discipline area and type of award.
6. Assessment techniques are fair, valid, reliable, consistent and a credible measure of the academic standard attained by students.
7. The planned resources, including staff, physical, online, library and student supports, sufficiently support the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme.
8. The programme facilitates lifelong learning for a diverse student population by setting out appropriate entry requirements and opportunities for access, transfer, and progression.
9. There is demand for potential graduates from the programme.
10. The learning environment and mode of delivery are consistent with the needs of the intended students of the programme and accessible and appropriate support services for students have been provided for.
11. Students will be well informed on the requirements of the programme, guided to relevant resources and supported in their studies in a caring environment.

Findings

Overall Finding

Validated without changes	
Validated subject to condition(s) and/or recommendation(s)	**X**
Rejected	

Reason for Overall Finding

The panel having reviewed the programme deem it appropriate to be validated in line with ATU's Programme Design and Validation Policies.

Commendations

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council of the following commendations.

The programme is innovative and responds to an identified societal issue.

Conditions

The Validation Panel advises Academic Council that subject to satisfying any condition(s) detailed below, the panel is satisfied that the proposed programme(s) meets the validation criteria as set out in Atlantic Technological University's Developing and Validating New Programmes Policy.

1. Review and reword the entry requirements for this programme to be explicit about the need for a minimum of a level 6 Higher Certificate, and including language requirements in line with ATU's Access, Transfer and Progression Policy.
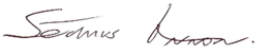
Recommendations

The panel advises Academic Council that the Programme Development Team and/or the Department should take cognisance of any recommendations outlined below.

1. Review the delivery of the programme to remove one hour per week of guest lecturers, instead embedding reference to guest lecturers in the teaching and learning strategy.
2. Include the project presentation day in the module hours.
3. Ensure blended delivery hours reflects the fact that for that mode some of the content will be delivered onsite.

Report Approval

This report has been agreed by the review panel and is signed on their behalf by the chairperson.

Signed: *Seamus Lennon.* Name Dr Seamus Lennon Validation Panel Chair	Date 14/02/2025